

November 8, 2004

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Children's Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS)

FROM: William Farland, Ph.D.
Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science
Office of Research and Development

TO: EPA Employees

The Children's Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS) is designed to fill critical data gaps in our understanding of children's exposure to pesticides and chemicals that can be found in typical household environments. The EPA seeks information to improve both risk assessment and risk management practices that will ultimately enable us to be more protective of children's health.

Recent news articles have mischaracterized the study and EPA is actively working to assure all interested parties that the study is designed to meet rigorous ethical and scientific standards.

Toward this end, EPA is taking the extraordinary step—because protecting the health and well-being of children is of paramount importance—of sending the study design for another external, independent review by an expert panel, made up of members of the Science Advisory Board, the Science Advisory Panel and the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee, prior to implementation. It is anticipated that this review will be completed, and that a report will be forwarded to the Administrator, in the spring of 2005. Based on this review, the Agency may refine the study design.

To date, the study design for CHEERS has already been externally reviewed for scientific merit and ethical protections. Specifically, four Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) for the Protection of Human Subjects have reviewed and approved the study to ensure that it complies with all ethical standards. These boards include outside, independent experts in the fields of medicine, ethics and community advocacy. This study was judged according to procedures codified in 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 46 that mandates special requirements for children as research participants. The IRBs and the dates they approved the study are: Battelle Memorial Institute (August, 2004), University of North Carolina (September, 2004), Florida Department of Health (pending approval), and University of Florida (May, 2004).

If you would like details about CHEERS, click here for the CHEERS Fact Sheet or go to www.epa.gov/cheers.